



*Office of Public Affairs
U.S. Embassy, Wellington*

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PSI FIFTH ANNIVERSARY

May 31, 2008, will mark the fifth anniversary of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI): a new kind of international cooperative effort in the fight against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

On May 28-29, 2008, the United States will host two meetings in honour of the PSI's fifth anniversary. The State Department will welcome senior policy makers from all PSI endorsing states will review the PSI's progress over the past five years and exchange ideas for strengthening it for the future. The second meeting will be a more detailed workshop open to all states. This meeting will seek to encourage new PSI endorsements and assist PSI-endorsing states with training, organizing for, and conducting interdictions. New Zealand government officials will participate and present in the Washington meetings.

"Partner nations can be proud of the PSI's solid record of success over these past five years. To date, PSI partners have conducted over 30 live and table top exercises, involving over 70 PSI partner states and exploring all modes of transportation: ground, air, and sea," said U.S. Ambassador Bill McCormick.

"Rogue states, terrorist and criminal organizations, and unscrupulous individuals who contemplate trafficking in WMD-related items must now contend with an international community united in detection and interdiction," he added.

The PSI began in May 2003 with eleven states who came together to establish the principles underlying the PSI. There are now almost 90 nations worldwide who have endorsed these principles, and participate in interdiction exercises, sharing information, and promoting international cooperation in stopping transfers of items and materials of WMD proliferation concern.

New Zealand's Minister of Customs Nanaia Mahuta has marked the fifth anniversary by announcing that New Zealand will host a PSI exercise in Auckland in mid-September. (The Minister's press release is available at:

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0805/S00204.htm>)

"Hosting this exercise underscores New Zealand's ongoing commitment to this multilateral initiative," said Ambassador McCormick.